



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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October 26, 2015
FB15-082

Commercial Harvest of Yellowtail Snapper in the South Atlantic Federal Waters Will Close on October 31, 2015

Commercial harvest of yellowtail snapper in South Atlantic Federal waters will close, **effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) October 31, 2015**. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2016.

The 2015 commercial catch limit is 1,596,510 pounds whole weight. Updated landings data indicate throughout 2015, yellowtail snapper landings have been consistently higher relative to previous years. Therefore, the commercial harvest must close given the catch limit will likely be reached by October 31, 2015.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is considering a change to the start date for future commercial yellowtail snapper fishing seasons to ensure harvest is open during the holiday season and perhaps have it closed during the summer months when these fish are spawning. The Council is scheduled to take final action on this change at their December 2015 meeting in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. If approved by the Council, NOAA Fisheries would work to implement this measure sometime in 2016. For more information or a schedule of public hearing dates and locations related to this Council action (Snapper-Grouper Regulatory Amendment 25),

visit: <http://safmc.net/meetings/public-hearing-and-scoping-meeting-schedule>.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and that is landing yellowtail snapper for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such fish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, October 31, 2015.

During the closure:

- Harvest and possession of yellowtail snapper is subject to the recreational bag and possession limits.
- Sale or purchase of fish taken from closed federal waters is prohibited.
- The prohibition on sale or purchased does not apply to the sale or purchase of yellowtail snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01, local time, October 31, 2015, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.
- The closure applies on both state and federal waters for a vessel with a federal commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper.